

Lambda Pi Eta Holiday Party for Delaware County Foster Children: Operations Binder

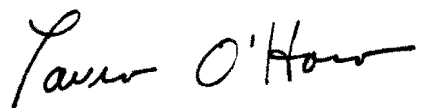
An Honors Thesis (HONORS 499)

by

Nicole Lengerich

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Laura O'Hara

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura O'Hara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

April 24, 2008

May 3, 2008

Spill
Theor
10
2,89
24
2,008
2,46

Abstract

In recent years, social consciousness has become more prevalent in our society. With huge celebrities becoming United Nations Goodwill Ambassadors and popular television shows finding ways to give back, little acts of community service are beginning to be unnoticed. It is important that these acts remain seen in the public eye because they are the heart of social awareness. Here at Ball State, members of Lambda Pi Eta, the Communication Studies Honors Society, has dedicated themselves to improving the local community through many acts of community service. One such act is their annual holiday party for Delaware County foster children. This party brings area foster families and Ball State students together help foster children celebrate the holiday season. I have been responsible for this event since its conception in 2006. Now that I am leaving, it is important for new Lambda Pi Eta members to learn how to plan and facilitate this party so that it may continue in future years. Consequently, I have put together this binder as an operations manual for future members. Contained in it are all steps that the event planner must go through to make the party a success.

Acknowledgments

- I want to thank Dr. Laura O'Hara for being my advisor on this project. She was extremely helpful with planning the party and creating the binder
- I would also like to thank all of the members of Lambda Pi Eta for helping me plan and facilitate the party. It would not have been successful without them.

Justification Statement

Herman Melville once said, "We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results." In our world, social connectivity is unavoidable. There is a growing population sharing a limited amount of space. Consequently, our lives are interconnected with people from all walks of life. Social awareness is important because of this interconnectivity. Due to our constant interactions, improving the quality of life for others can improve the quality of life for all. In recent years, the Communication Studies' Honors Society, Lambda Pi Eta, has started to become active in this social awareness by hosting a holiday party for Delaware County foster children. Since Lambda Pi Eta's induction at Ball State University in 2006, the members of this society have taken an active role in the facilitation of this event. The holiday party is important to the community because it enables social interaction to occur between Delaware County residents and Ball State students. Moreover, the party provides a means for foster families to come together with Ball State students to show the foster children that their community does truly care about them.

I chose to do this operations binder as my honors thesis because of its ability to help better facilitate this party in future years. This party is important to all involved because of its ability to bring people together and help improve the quality of life for all. Having an operations binder to reference each year will help future Lambda Pi Eta members better plan the party and facilitate the event. I have been in charge of this party for the only two years of its existence. Consequently, it will be more difficult for new members to step in and plan the party. Having this binder will help the new members facilitate the planning and execution of the party efficiently and effectively.

This binder applies to my course work at Ball State in two ways. First, this binder is a sort of extension of the independent study honors colloquium I completed on special event planning. For this course, I planned and executed a very large speech tournament on campus. Through this experience, I learned a lot about how to put large events together and delegate tasks to other members efficiently. I was able to carry these skills into this activity and binder. Second, this binder allowed me to utilize my communication skills developed in various major and non-major classes. I compiled the information in this binder as succinctly as possible so that future planners will be able to understand the information with ease. I learned this skill through all of the written papers and essays I completed both in the honors college and as a Communication Studies major.

Contact Page

Ball State People

Kuhns, Liz (DCDFS)	(765) 751-9565
Elizabeth.Kuhns@dcs.IN.gov	
O'Hara, Laura (Advisor)	(765) 713-1097
lohara@bsu.edu	
Student Voluntary Services	(765) 285-3476

Parents who can help with fundraising or collecting gifts

Eppard, Stephanie	(765) 396-9239
b.eppard@insightbb.com	
Mahon, Pat	(765) 744-1713
plmahon2@aol.com	
Lizotte, Heather	(765) 744-8882
heather7425@yahoo.com	
Taylor, Dan & Robin	(765) 284-6086
danrobintaylor@aol.com	

Vendors

Dominoes	(765) 289-3030
Marsh (Debbie Grub – Manager)	(765) 751-1500
1500 W. McGalliard	Muncie, IN 47304

Location for event

Knights of Columbus - Kelly Young (Mgr)	(765) 282-8280
3600 W Purdue Ave	Muncie, IN 47304

Holiday Party Basics

Total Number of Students Needed: 14 – 21

Number of Committees: 3

1. Fundraising Committee
2. Craft Committee
3. Gift Committee

Location of Party: Knights of Columbus (K of C)

Student Voluntary Services: The Honors Society advisor will contact Student Voluntary Services. They will post the event on their website and interested students will contact you or the Faculty advisor to help.

Food Money: The Delaware Department of Family Services supplies a \$1,000 voucher to pay for food. Consequently the fund raising committee must raise enough money to cover the craft supplies and gifts for the children.

Fund Raising Committee

Number of Students: 2 – 3

Primary Function: Procure donations from area businesses to buy crafts and gifts.

LPE fundraisers: The students on this committee must be selected carefully by the president of LPE and the Faculty Advisor. The two to three students on this committee should have sales experience or skills. It is also preferable that these members be well known or accepted in the community. This will enable them to better interact with local businesses. These individuals will be responsible for calling potential donors and then going to the businesses to actually solicit funds. Therefore, these committee members must be able to persuade businesses to donate money or supplies.

Initial Meeting: This committee plays an essential role in the preparation for the Holiday party. The Fundraising committee needs to meet for the first time in late January or early February the semester before the holiday party. I know this sounds early, but this committee must get started early if they hope to procure funds from corporate stores, like Wal-mart and Toys-R-Us. These corporations must be contacted several months in advance regarding donations, or they cannot get clearance from their corporate offices. At this first meeting, students will brainstorm various businesses to contact for donations. Provided in Appendix A is a list of businesses who have donated money in the past. Other companies that are good to contact are local businesses, such as law offices and locally owned stores. Since these businesses have a vested interest in the community, they are more likely to give than large corporations. However, large corporations are also important to contact since they have a much larger pool of funds to give from. Another great outlet for fundraising is Stephanie Eppard, who helps the committee to raise funds and collect crafts and gifts. Her number is listed in the contact page. If at all possible, she should be invited to attend the first meeting.

After making an extensive list of businesses to call, this committee must next divide the list among the members. Each member will be responsible for three things.

- He/she must deliver a solicitation letter to the manager or owner of the store. A sample solicitation letter is located in Appendix B. This letter must tell the manager or owner who the Honor Society is, why they are requesting funds, and what precisely they are requesting. The faculty advisor should sign this letter and print it on department letterhead to make the letter seem official.
- Next, the student will need to follow up the letter with a call to the business. If possible, the student should make an appointment to speak with the manager regarding the letter. If not, the student should go to the business and check about the letter.
- Finally, if this is successful, the committee member must return to the business and collect the donation.

Future meetings: After the initial meeting, the students will begin soliciting donations. Large corporations should be approached first. Local businesses can be contacted later. This committee should meet once a month for progress reports. If the committee is having a lot of success collecting funds and staying on tasks, these meetings may not be needed every month. By the beginning of October, this committee should have a solidified count of donations so that the craft and gift committees can begin their tasks. By the end of October, all funds should be collected.

After the Party: After the event is done, “thank you” letters need to be sent out to everyone who donated money or supplies to the party. This task is easiest to accomplish if the committee gets together and works on the letters together. A sample of a thank you letter can be found in Appendix C. Thank you card would also be acceptable.

Craft Committee

Number of Students: 6 - 9

Primary Function: To come up with the crafts for each age group, purchase the supplies for those crafts, create prototypes of each craft, and to facilitate the crafts during the holiday party.

LPE Craft Members: Members of this committee are responsible for the creative part of the party. They must come up with the craft ideas and be able to teach these crafts to others. Consequently, the ideal members of this committee should be people who are creative and like to teach others. People on this committee and the gifts committee should self select to participate. This way, members will best be able to use their abilities on the committee of their choice.

Initial Meeting: At the initial Lambda Pi Eta meeting, members should choose which committee they would like to be on. After this, at the initial craft committee meeting, members should divide themselves into three groups. Each group will be responsible for one age group. Past years have shown that the best way to divide the kids by age is to have groups for ages 0 - 5, 6 – 10, and 11 and up. Each of these three categories should have two to three members. After members have put themselves into the group, they need to exchange information so that they may meet to work on the crafts. Examples of crafts used successfully in past years are listed in Appendix D. At this meeting, committee members will also need to double check and update the inventory list of left over supplies from the previous year. Knowing what inventory is already available may help groups decide on crafts.

Future Meetings: After the initial committee meeting, future meetings can be held one of two ways.

- Each subcommittee can be left to its own devices and run its own meetings. In this case, you just need to check with the committees periodically to make sure everything is going okay.
- Or, you can hold meetings every few weeks where the subcommittees can get together and work on their crafts.

Regardless of which option you choose, all craft prototypes should be done by the week before the party. This way, subcommittee members can be certain that the crafts will work and can trouble shoot any problems. Each subcommittee is responsible for bringing their craft supplies and prototypes to the Knights of Columbus (K of C). They are also responsible for setting up the crafts and teaching the children how to make them.

After the Party: After the party, each subgroup is responsible for making a list of all of the left over supplies. These lists must then be compiled by one of the committee members into one list. The next year, the committee members can reuse the left over supplies for any crafts.

Gift Committee

Number of Students: 6 - 9

Primary Function: To buy and wrap gifts for each age group. Also, put name tags on each gift and divide gifts into “family bags.” These are white trash bags tied with red ribbons that have all of the gifts for each family in them. This way, Santa only has to give each family a bag instead of each child a toy. This saves a lot of time.

LPE Gift Members: These group members will need to:

- Shop for toys on a budget and be able to wrap the gifts and deliver them to the K of C the morning of the party.
- They will also be responsible for purchasing any wrapping supplies that are not left over from last year.
- Finally, they will be responsible for selecting toys left over from last year to use and for creating a list of all left over toys after the party to be reused next year.

It should be made clear to all gift committee members that most of their work will be done towards the end of the semester. If that is a problem, they should probably join a different committee.

Initial Meeting: At the initial Honor Society meeting, members should self select into this committee. At the first gift committee meeting, members should select an age group of children to be responsible for getting toys for. In past years, the division of ages has been: 0 – 2, 3 – 5, 6 – 8, 9 – 11, 12 and up. After they have selected one to two age groups (depending on the number of committee members), it is time to brainstorm gift ideas and sort through the gifts left over from past years to see what is reusable for this year. Also, this is a good time to introduce the committee members to Stephanie Eppard. She will be able to help procure gifts, and can give the committee members ideas for where to get gifts and what items have worked well in the past.

Future Meetings: After the initial meeting, members will need to wait until an estimate of the number and ages of children can be compiled. After the estimate has been received, these members must buy gifts for the children (together or as a group). After gifts have been bought, the group can wrap them together at meetings or individually. About a week before the party, you need to meet with the committee and make sure everyone has all of the gifts they need wrapped and ready to go. At this meeting, you should also create the preliminary “family bags.” These are trash bags that have all of the presents for each family in them. This way, you save Santa time by having him deliver gifts by family instead of by child. Of course, some of the bags will have to change the day of the party, but for the most part these bags should be ready at this meeting. Committee members should also be prepared for having to add to or take away

from the bags the night before/day of. Unfortunately, a lot of changes can happen last minute, and the committee members need to have a few extra gifts for each age group to be able to adapt.

After the Party: After the party, members of this committee need to make a detailed list of all of the left over gifts. This list should be combined with the lists from previous years, and should also include all wrapping supplies available for next year.

Morning of Party

On the morning of the party, all committee members need to meet at the Knights of Columbus (K of C) at a designated time to begin the set up. It is important that this time is at least 2 – 3 hours before the party begins to make sure everyone has plenty of time. Several tasks must be accomplished in this time frame. These tasks include:

- Carrying all supplies into K of C
- Checking to make sure you have all of the supplies you need
- Setting up tables and chairs
- Putting table cloths on all tables
- Setting up craft area
- Setting up all crafts
- Setting up food/drink area
- Putting “family bags” under the Christmas tree
- Preparing a Santa area, this is where he will sit to deliver gifts
- Setting up a check-in station
- Making sure everything is ready at least a half an hour before the party starts since some guests will arrive early.

After the party

At the end of the party, your work is not done. Several things need to happen before everyone heads home. These include:

- Before the families leave, it is important to make sure they have a copy of the Parent Survey to fill out and return to Heather Lizotte or Steph Eppards. These surveys will allow us to determine what the children and parents liked and disliked. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix E.
- After all of the families have left, it is time to clean up. Since there are many tasks to do and everyone will be tired, it is best to assign tasks beforehand. Things that need to be done include:
 - cleaning all tables and putting them away
 - putting chairs away
 - emptying the trash
 - picking up all trash
 - sweeping the floors
- At this time, all extra gifts and supplies should be taken to Laura O'Hara's house/designated storage space for storage until preparations begin for the next year.
- Finally, before everyone disperses, it is important to set a follow up meeting time where everyone can discuss the party and give input for next year.

Food Info

Each year, Liz Kuhns (see contact information in front) at the Delaware County Department of Family Services provides us with \$1,000.00 for food. The Honor Society sponsor is responsible for contacting Liz about the vouchers and arranging a way to pick up vouchers. Dominoes in Muncie lets us get large, one topping pizzas for \$6.00 a piece. The rest of the food items you can get at Marsh, since they will accept our vouchers. You will need wide variety of food products. Appendix F contains a list of all the food bought from Marsh for the 2007 Holiday Party. This should give you an idea of types of foods you will need. In past years, we have served pizza, pop, ice cream sundaes, and frosted cookies (as a craft). You can expand on this or change it, but it is a simple and inexpensive way to feed everyone.

In order to use the vouchers from Liz Kuhns, you will need to have an exact price and count for every item you will buy. This is shown in Appendix F. To do this, first determine all food products you will need. Next, determine how many of each product you want to buy. After that, call Marsh (1500 w McGalliard) and explain to the manager who you are and what you need. At this point, it is ESSENTIAL to verify that they will still take the vouchers. After that, get the prices for each item from the manager. Finally, multiply the price of the item by the number of that item you are buying and record it in a spreadsheet. When you have done that for each item, you can total it up and relay that figure to Liz.

Sponsor Duties

The fraternity sponsor has a variety of duties they must complete. Below is a list of all of these duties:

- Arrange a “call out meeting” for all fraternity members.
- Register with Student Voluntary Services so that students outside of Lambda Pi Eta can assist with the party.
- Determine date of the party and reserve the K of C. In past years, the second week of December (or the weekend before finals week) has worked well.
- Contact Liz Kuhns regarding the vouchers
- Find a Santa Claus. In past years Michael O’Hara has performed this part. If he is not available, try other departmental faculty. Just be sure that whoever you use is trustworthy and reliable.
- Get the Santa suit from Party Wizards. The phone number for this store is (765) 282-7500.

Appendix A

Previous Donors

- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Abby Candles
- Glen Stamp (Communication Studies Department Chair)
- Kerasotes Movie Theaters
- Various local attorneys
- Family Video

Appendix B

Xxxxxxx xx, xxxx

Dear Donor:

The holiday season is a time for giving. This year, Lambda Pi Eta, the Honor Society of Communication Studies at Ball State is giving back to the community by organizing a holiday party for area foster children. However, we cannot accomplish this goal by ourselves. We need your help. In order to host this party, we need community businesses to donate money so that we can purchase gifts, food, items for games and activities, and holiday decorations.

If you or your business would be willing to contribute money (or gifts and supplies) to this cause, we would greatly appreciate it. Not only will your gift help the Delaware Foster Children's Association and Ball State to host this event, it will also brighten the holiday season for many of our area's children. Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura O'Hara

Faculty Sponsor

Lambda Pi Eta

lohara@bsu.edu

(765) 285-1998

Appendix C

Contact name at organization

Organization Name

Address

Phone number

Date

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for kind donation of _____ for the Lambda Pi Eta Holiday Party for Delaware County Foster Children. Your generosity was greatly appreciated by the children and their parents! We look forward to your continued support and wish you a very Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Laura O'Hara

Faculty Sponsor

Lambda Pi Eta

lohara@bsu.edu

(765) 285-1998

Appendix D

0 – 5: Little Debbie cake walk, Waffle cone Christmas trees, Sugar cookie frosting

6 – 10: Foam picture frames, puzzle piece wreaths, decorating ornaments

11 and up: T-shirt decorating, making jewelry, making votive candle holders

* Many of these activities are appropriate for more than one age group.

Appendix E

Holiday Party Wrap Up Survey

*Please fill this survey out openly and honestly. All results will be anonymous and confidential. Participation is completely optional, but the results will help us improve this party for next year. Please return completed surveys to Stephanie Eppard or Heather Lizotte at your earliest convenience. Thank you!

1. Please list your favorite part of the holiday party.

2. What is something we can improve for next year?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being least and 10 being best) how do you think the party went?

Appendix F

Voucher Purchases for Foster Children's Christmas Party

Estimated Number of Attendees: (as of Monday, December 3, 2007)

30 Adults (will include parents and social workers)

80 Children (62 actual count—estimating for 18-20 more “last minute” guests)

VENDOR/CONTACT PERSON	ITEM	COST PER UNIT	NUMBER OF UNITS	EXTENDED COST
Marsh McGalliard Mgr: Debbie Grub	Marsh 2 liter pop (variety)	.89	20	\$17.80
	Gallon tubs vanilla ice cream	3.58	5	\$17.90
	5 oz. pkg chopped nut topping	2.29	6	\$13.74
	Ice cream “sprinkles”	3.49	4	\$13.96
	Marsh “Reddy- Whip” whipped cream	1.99	4	\$7.96
	Marsh Chocolate Ice Cream Syrup 24 oz	1.28	3	3.84

	Smucker's Ice Cream Syrup (variety of flavors)	2.48	3	7.44
	Plain Sugar Cookies (Bakery—see Marty or Leslie after 10:00 a.m.)	2.99 per dozen	16 dozen (192 cookies)	\$47.84
	Frosting in Tubs— purchased by the pound) (Bakery: See Marty or Leslie after 10:00 a.m.)	5.97 per pound tub (2 white) (1 green) (1 red)	4 pounds (in tubs)	\$23.88
	"Little Debbie's" X-mas Snack Cakes	\$1.39	10 big boxes	\$ 13.90
	Hershey's Chocolate Kisses in XMAS colored foil	\$3.00 per bag	12 bags	\$ 36.00

	Large, wrapped candy canes	\$1.00 per box (12 per box)	12 boxes	\$ 12.00
	Christmas Nougats (like taffy; individual candies with tree in center	\$ 2.29	12 bags	\$27.48
			TOTAL AMOUNT OF MARSH VOUCHER PURCHASE	\$243.74
Dominoes Pizza 289-3030	Large One Topping Pizzas	6.00	37	\$222.00
Total Amount DCS Vouchers				465.74